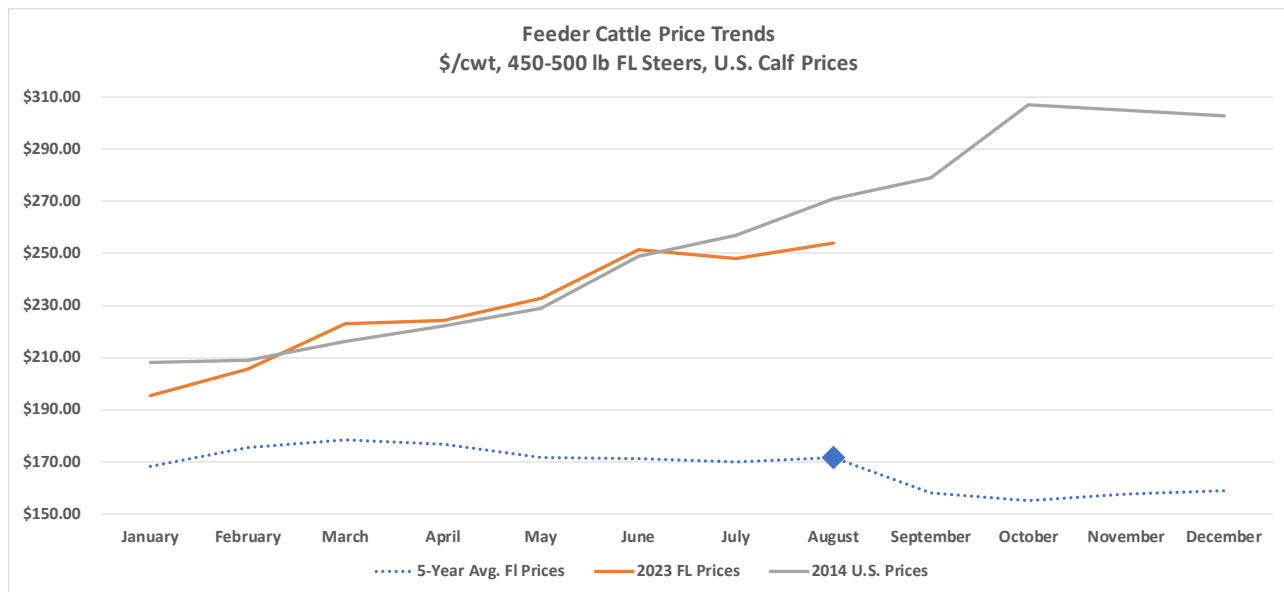




What should producers be expecting this fall? August 2023

Historically, [during this time of year](#), we would start seeing prices decline due to seasonality trends. It has been shipping season for most ranches here in Florida as well as across the country, so spring-born calves have been sold. A large supply of cattle would typically result in lower prices. However, there is nothing typical about the 2023 prices we have been seeing. Prices for 450–500 lb. feeder steers are up 49% year-over-year. Prices are 30% higher than in January of this year and appear to be continually rising if this trend similar to 2014 prices continues. As mentioned in [the previous report](#), inventory levels of the beef cow herd are at an all-time low since the 1960s. Such a drastic drop in inventory due to heavy liquidation as a result of drought and high input prices will result in a “dramatic” response from cattle producers across the United States to try and rebuild the herd. While some producers may be starting to think about heifer retention and rebuilding, some producers may be considering selling weaned heifers to take advantage of current prices. This decision involves many factors when it comes to the cost of raising replacement heifers. Producers contemplating what to do with their heifers should weigh the economic pros and cons of both options. Currently, 500 lb. heifers in Florida are selling for an average price of \$221.51/cwt., 51 percent higher than this month in 2022.



Thinking Economically in the Everyday Tasks

It may not feel like it with temperatures above 100 degrees, but fall is coming! With that, producers need to start thinking about when they want to collect and send in forage/hay samples. Knowing the nutrient content of your forages during the fall and winter months is necessary in calculating the supplemental needs of your cows. The first step in raising a heavy, marketable calf at weaning is having a calf during calving. To make sure you have calves to sell, making sure cows are healthy and getting what they need to keep themselves healthy and sustain milk production is vital. Maintaining body condition score is also beneficial in increasing the chances of the cow being rebred so that you can start the process all over again of raising a healthy calf crop. Investing in a supplementation program may look like a large expense, especially with current high input prices. However, as the saying goes, you sometimes must spend money to make money when it comes to making efficient management decisions. Selling a larger lot of heavier calves is the return on the investment of supplementing.

Questions, contact Hannah at h.baker@ufl.edu.

See this update and other helpful resources online at <https://rcrec-ona.ifas.ufl.edu/about/directory/staff/hannah-baker/>.